

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

President's Park - White House

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: WHHO

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

"It is not merely for today, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives.... I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has. " Abraham Lincoln, Speech to One Hundred Sixty-sixth Ohio Regiment, Aug. 22, 1864.

The White House is home and office of the president, historic site, museum, tourist attraction, civic centerpiece, and world stage. However, it embodies as Abraham Lincoln recounts, even greater significance to us all as the symbol of the hopes and dreams of a nation. It is in the spirit of this legacy that the White House and President's Park accept the ambitious challenge of preparing these exceptional park areas for the National Park Service Centennial. Accordingly, we will improve and refine park resources, programs, and services systemically. In so doing we will ensure an enhanced experience for all visitors including those at the White House Visitor Center, those headed for the White House tour, those participating in interpretive programs in President's Park, those attending special events, those participating in education programs, and to virtual visitors on our web site. We will strive to enhance visitor understanding, appreciation and experience by providing multiple types and levels of educational and interpretive programming using the latest technologies available but never losing the human contact between National Park Service staff and our visitors. We will make park visitors park stewards enjoining them in a common purpose of preserving our precious natural and cultural resources. We will provide a safe and welcome environment for visitors and employees who visit and work at these special places. We will invest in our staff and in so doing establish model management and partnership practices by a workforce that reflects the changing and diverse face of America. Our success in achieving this Centennial vision will also depend upon the continued support of the White House Historical Association and our many other partners. This group of public and private organizations will play a crucial role in helping the park obtain the financial, intellectual, and professional means to achieve these objectives.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Ann Bowman Smith

Site: WHHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

A cornerstone of the park's Centennial Initiative goals is to work with its partner the White House Historical Association to complete a comprehensive rehabilitation of the White House Visitor Center, including mechanical and electrical systems; installation of improved entry area; restoration of the space's aesthetic and historical integrity; the addition of a theater/multipurpose area designed to be shielded from extraneous sources of ambient noise; the redesign of the center's audiovisual resources and exhibits to create an interactive and multidimensional interpretive and educational experience relating to the history and significance of the White House and President's Park.

A primary goal of this newly designed facility is to provide visitors with a place where they can get oriented to the physical layout of the White House and President's Park, be introduced to the primary interpretive themes, discover the variety of programs and activities available, plan their visit and be inspired. In short the newly rehabilitated White House Visitor Center will be an invaluable asset to the park's interpretive and visitor service program.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: WHHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

The park will develop a comprehensive and systematic program to monitor and evaluate, protect, preserve, and maintain the park's natural and cultural resources. Resources are being degraded by heavy visitor use, soil compactions, erosion, acid rain, pollution, and plant and urban wildlife problems. This program would address the preservation of the President's Park's natural and cultural resources which consist of historic landscapes and 25 historic structures, including 18 statues and memorials, which continue to require repair, rehabilitation, and maintenance. This program would rehabilitate and restore structures and landscapes to a good condition, provide an initiative to mitigate impacts that affect these resources, and intensify daily preservation maintenance to preserve investments. This program would result in increased preservation of park resources and increased visitor satisfaction and understanding through the sharing of data for interpretive and educational programs.

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Site: WHHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Set the standard of excellence in urban park landscape design and maintenance.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

In order to help preserve, protect and maintain the investment that the American people have made in the facilities, infrastructure and resources of President's Park the park will establish a comprehensive and multifaceted program that will combine NPS and contracted services to establish the following:

1. Plumbing Maintenance Program for Park Fountains, Irrigation Systems, and Restrooms
2. Vegetation and Tree Maintenance Program
3. Turf Maintenance Program
4. Preventative Maintenance Program for Park Machinery and Vehicles
5. Trash Collection and Restroom Sanitation Program
5. Trade and Craft Work Program for Park Structures and Facilities.

These programs collectively would insure the preservation, protection and maintenance of park facilities, infrastructure and resources and contribute greatly to the park's ability to realize its Centennial vision.

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STEWARDSHIP

☒ Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Lafayette Park is a vital park area that in large part due to its proximity to the White House possesses a long, rich, and engaging history to people of all nations. In order to gain a greater understanding of this park area a revised National Register Nomination will be completed. A completed national register nomination with historical contexts, contributing structures and landscape features as well as maps and photo-documentation will fully document Lafayette Square to NHL standards and will form the basis of a revised NHL nomination.

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Site: WHHO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Encourage children to be future conservationists.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Environmental Education Program "Bridging the Watershed" is a public/private partnership, established in the Washington, DC metro area in March 1998. The program consists of graduate-accredited teacher training, as well as in-classroom lessons, field activities and service learning opportunities for students which will promote the national parks in the watershed as learning laboratories for secondary level students and teachers. Among the program objectives is to establish an accredited annual summer institute for teachers & rangers, and to develop an interactive Internet web-site which offers pre- and post- field trip activities and accesses to field data. This will be an ongoing program providing inner-city students (18,000 per year) with the skills to apply science and math skills, while learning about critical resource management issues relevant to NCR parks.

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ENVIRONMENT

☒ Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

☒ Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

In order to reduce environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality the Park will:

- Lease hybrid vehicles when appropriate
- Purchase "green" products when appropriate
- Maintain METRO subsidy program
- Perform timely preventative maintenance on our vehicles and facilities, including our heating systems.
- Utilize weather-stations in conjunction with Park irrigation systems to reduce use of water resources.

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Site: WHHO

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

☒ Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

In order to enjoin the public, event permit holders, and partners in preservation of the investment of that the American people have made in the rehabilitation of the Ellipse the park will cooperate with neighboring park areas, to explore and implement strategies to raise environmental conscience by providing a pervasive educational approach stressing the importance of sustainable urban landscapes to the health of cities and their residents. An exhibit at the White House Visitor Center will introduce visitors to the park's priceless and fragile resources and seek their support in helping to preserve this historic landscape. Examples of tangible resources impacted by visitor use will be presented as well as suggested environmentally friendly visitor practices. A similar approach will be directed to all parties engaging in permitted activities in the park.

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Site: WHHO

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish an urban park "leave no trace" program in Lafayette Park. This will require mounting a campaign to inform visitors, partners, permit holders, and neighbors about the program, outline its importance, and explain its benefits to us all.

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Site: WHHO

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to cooperate with national, regional and neighboring park areas on such events as Healthy Parks, Healthy Living Events, National Cherry Blossom Festival, and National Park Week.

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Site: WHHO

RECREATION

☒ Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

The park will strive to increase volunteer hours by 100% before the Centennial to match the servicewide objective. These volunteers will play a crucial role in the park's efforts to realize its Centennial vision.

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Site: WHHO

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Set in an urban environment, in close proximity to the White House, President's Park is a National Park Service unit with trails that engage visitors in a discovery of some of the most important people, places, and events that have shaped this nation. It is an active forum for the expression of first amendment rights, a venue for national celebration, and an unsurpassed place to reflect on this nation's past, present, and future. However, this constant preeminent place in the world's spotlight bears with it the concomitant responsibility to maintain the Park and its trails to the highest possible standard. Starting in 2006 the National Park Service has engaged Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups as active stewards in the preservation, protection, and interpretation of this compelling area within its care. In these day long programs after completing clean up activities that include weeding and sweeping the groups go on a tour of President's Park led by a park ranger encountering a few persons of the past (NPS and volunteer period interpreters) along the way. The overarching goal of this program is to invite people of all ages to actively engage in support of the NPS mission.

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Site: WHHO

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

A comprehensive interpretive/educational program for visitors would be focused at the White House Visitor Center and would be complemented by some interpretive activities at various sites throughout President's Park. Programs would be developed for the White House tour visitor and for visitors interested in the site's diverse themes. An active interpretive and community outreach program would ensure the park's continued relevance to local residents.

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Site: WHHO

EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park will offer curriculum based education programs designed for every grade level for students in elementary and secondary grades in the Washington DC Metropolitan area. The park will also develop and make available curriculum based education resources for teacher facilitated programs to enrich the visitor experience of the countless school groups that visit the park and are unable to participate in a ranger-led education program. The park will develop a Teaching With Historic Places curriculum unit on Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C. This Teaching with Historic Places lesson plan would turn students into historians as they study primary sources, historical and contemporary photographs and maps, and other documents, and then search for the history that abounds in this urban park area. Also create a resource for educators entitled Lesson Plan in a Box. This resource guide for teacher-led park visits will be targeted for the middle school and high school audiences.

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Site: WHHO

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

President's Park will develop and design a National Park Service WebRanger component to the National Park Service President's Park (White House) web site. WebRangers allows children from all over the country (and the world) to become Junior Rangers even if they cannot physically visit a National Park. WebRangers will mirror the in-Park Junior Ranger program, which is currently under development. Children complete a series of activities to earn the title "WebRanger" and a certificate. The President's Park (White House) WebRanger site will engage young people in age-appropriate activities that will allow them to discover the significance of the White House and President's Park.

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Site: WHHO

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

President's Park will develop and design a National Park Service Junior Ranger Booklet for children from ages 6 - 13. This Junior Ranger booklet and its associated program will engage young people in age-appropriate activities that will allow them to discover the significance of the White House and President's Park.

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Site: WHHO

EDUCATION

☒ **Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.**

☒ **Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.**

A comprehensive interpretive/educational program for visitors would be focused at the White House Visitor Center and would be complemented by some interpretive activities at various sites throughout President's Park. Programs would be developed for the White House tour visitor and for visitors interested in the site's diverse themes. An active interpretive and community outreach program would ensure the park's continued relevance to local residents.

By September 30, 2011, 92% visitors understand the significance of the park as measured in public survey data.

By September 30, 2011, 94% of visitors to President's Park are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

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Site: WHHO

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ **Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.**

☒ **Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.**

Establish a comprehensive safety program that would include creation of a dedicated FTE, program implementation, safety and skills training, routine replacement of personal protective equipment; hazard analytical assessment; program materials; and medical monitoring program for at-risk positions. This program would increase safety awareness, improve the lost-time accident/incident rate, and reduce Workers' Compensation charge-back costs. This program would provide a safer, healthier park/work experience for visitors and employees.

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